

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES.

HOW THE DAY WAS KEPT.

EXERCISES IN THE CHURCHES—UNSTINTED GENEROSITY AT THE CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS—HOW THE POOR AND SUFFERING WERE CARED FOR—OBSERVANCES IN SUBURBAN TOWNS.

Christmas was commemorated yesterday in the old-time fashion, the bitter cold rendering it more of a fireside holiday than usual. There was a large attendance at many churches and appropriate sermons were preached. Out-door sports and pastimes were neglected because of the cold. Charity's open hand made the day bright for the inmates of public and private institutions. All enjoyed the dinner and presents which came with this festival. The day was unusually quiet in the city, and little disturbance and few crimes were reported by the police. In suburban towns the day was generally observed.

MARKED FEATURES OF THE DAY.

LARGE ATTENDANCE AT THE CHURCHES—THE KEEN AIR PREVENTS OUT-DOOR SPORTS—SCENES AT THE CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

It is doubtful whether there is another holiday that is looked forward to with so many measurable anticipations both by old and young as Christmas. There are holidays that are celebrated by different nations for various reasons, but Christmas is a day on which all Christendom rejoices in song and thanksgiving. To the old it is a day of rest, recreation and social enjoyment. Families that have long been broken are once again united, and the joys and sorrows of the past and the hopes of the future are dwelt upon with mingled fondness and regret. Friends' of by-gone years and one familiar spots are revisited, and pleasant memories are revived. On the other hand, the day, which has been anxiously awaited for weeks and months, has peculiar charms and delights for the younger members of the family. Everyone knows how avocational every dime has been stored in the little banks, that some presents may be bought for the loved friend or relatives, and what an air of mystery has brooded over the household for days. And who could number the bright and happy faces of those who, almost before the sun was up yesterday morning, found some long-wished-for trinket in capacious stockings!

The church chimes rang out merrily yesterday morning upon the clear, cold air, as if defying the biting wind to do its worst. The day dawned bright and cold, and he who ventured out of doors in the early hours found he had to face "a nipping and an eager air." Nor did the fierce gusts cease sweeping about the corners and playing havoc with everything that was loose during the entire day. A few fleecy clouds were blown along the blue sky by the lew west wind, but there were no signs of the snow for which the boys have been longing.

At an early hour persons began to be seen on the streets, dressed in their cloaks, while early masses were celebrated, and later thongos were seen entering the churches in which elaborate musical programmes were to be rendered. The interior of most of the churches were decked out with evergreen and flowers, pointing to the eyes, as the rich music was to the ear. In many churches orchestras and well-known singers secured for the occasion gave additional interest to the exercises. The theatres, at many of which extra matines were given, were well-attended, and by the amusement and fan-fiving portion of the community.

During the entire day the city was a desored appearance, and the streets were almost deserted. The street cars are wont to run in because the excessive cold drove them under cover or caused them to gather about street fires. To many boys, the order of the Commissioners forbidding skating at Central Park was a source of disappointment. Skating parties were put forth by the various charitable and benevolent institutions of the city to make the day one to be remembered with pleasure by the poor who come to the park to play. At the several missions, hospitals, houses of industry and newsboys' lodgings houses, bountiful dinners were served. At many places an "open house" was virtually kept, and the marvellers were won in with the rich gifts and delicacies secured from the friends who thought the hand gauged a boy's appetite. To many cheerless homes came bright faces and willing hands to help make up a happy day, one by kind, encouraging words and substantial aid.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CHARITIES.

THE WARDS OF THE PUBLIC FURNISHED WITH CHRISTMAS CHEER—SCENES AT THE VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS—A RED LETTER DAY FOR THE SICK AND THOSE IN PRISON.

If one has a plethoric purse, a heart not too soft and an ear not too delicate, perhaps the best place to spend the two hours before the Christmas dinner is in the chapel of the Five Points House of Industry. As it was yesterday, 300 children, nearly equally distributed as to sex, were ranged on the benches in full view of the audience. Over their heads was the motto "Merry Christmas." The conventional wreaths of green were supplemented with others of pink, white and royal purple, while at the entrance sat a very youthful "old woman" who lived in a shoe," who rather sleepily held a basket for the receipt of offerings to the funds of the House. There was singing, in which the soprano was really alto, and the tenor and bass were only supplied by the piano; yet very sweet music resulted from the combination of so many fresh young voices. There was pantomime, in which "Bo-Peep" very suddenly went to sleep and as suddenly woke up to see the vision of the lamb's tails without their owners. There were recitations by little children who had to be put in chairs to make them visible, and every one held his breath at the thin, piping voice which might be audible until the time came to applaud. And there were calisthenic exercises, including that funny hand exercise where 500 hands moving in unison make a wonderful effect, under the leadership of a ten-year-old girl. Underneath all this, was the fact that the poor were relieved, the 300 children are cared for in the best of all ways, and the money raised from the collection in one way or another, and, perhaps, more important to the children, that at 4 o'clock yesterday a substantial dinner of turkey was prepared and ready.

At the New York Home for the Destitute Children gathered at the Howard Mission, No. 40 New-Bowery, to receive their annual present and a Christmas dinner. The chapel was tastefully decorated with evergreens and with a large pile of presents, mostly containing cakes, candies and toys. The Rev. Dr. Sartine opened the exercises by telling the children a Christmas story. This was followed by recitations and readings by John H. Gill, Miss Stark and D. J. Griflin gave some practical selections.

The children then assembled in the basement and were furnished with oyster soup, fruits and cakes. The dinner was composed of about 150 newshoys and others partook of the feast. This branch recently received \$250—through Francis A. Stout from General James H. Van Alen, now residing in the Bronx. It is a fact that a good Christmas dinner consisting of turkey and ice-cream dessert should be provided, and that the cost of such a meal should be applied to the purchase of a warm flannel shirt and two pairs of socks to each boy. John Crosby Brown and Major Philip Schuyler also gave shirts and clothing to those in need of these articles. After dinner addresses were given by Dr. Brown, John Crosby Brown, and W. L. and A. L. Smith. Songs and recitations by the boys concluded the exercises.

The dinner to the inmates of the Girls' Lodging-House, No. 27 St. Marks-place, was given by John Jacob Astor, and a large amount of money was collected. The dinner was concluded by Mrs. Hurley, the matron, who invited the parlor where, much to her surprise, she was presented with a revolving arm-chair by the appropriate representative of the firm. In the same manner was this attended by the present lodgers, as well as by many who have formerly received the benefits of the Home, and who are now out at service. "Santa Claus" in full costume, and in the name of the president of each of the girls who lodged in the house with a special present. This was followed by an entertainment consisting of recitations, charades, singing and other amusements.

For the new boys at the lodgings-house in Chambers-st., the dinner was provided by Mr. O'Connor. His bounty did not fail yesterday, and Charles O'Connor had the happy trouble of selecting 500 boys who are now out on the road, with some pocket money for their daily expenses. The boys were given a good meal with robust appetites, and did full justice to the plentiful Christmas dunes. The regular inmates on the previous day had received a gift of underclothing.

Christmas Day in Vincentine Hall, for boys and girls, which was celebrated at 1 p.m. Father Brumage in the Chapel of the Immaculate Virgin, at the Home. Singmberger's mass in D was rendered by a full choir of young children, and at the organ by the organist, Mr. C. H. Gilder. The altar was decorated, the crib of Bethlehem abounding being well represented. A sermon on the great event commemorated was preached by Father Brumage, and over 100 boys and girls were present. The dinner was concluded at 10 o'clock by the children in the Home. "The homeless Child," a poem, composed by one of the orphans, and another of the youthful inmates read a suitable address. Dinner took place at midday, when over 375 children sat down to a repast consisting of a large turkey, a ham, and a plum pudding. The exercises during the day included the singing of songs, recitations and speeches.

The third Christmas dinner has been provided for the new boys at the lodgings-house in Chambers-st., which was celebrated at 1 p.m. Father Brumage in the Chapel of the Immaculate Virgin, at the Home. Singmberger's mass in D was rendered by a full choir of young children, and at the organ by the organist, Mr. C. H. Gilder. The altar was decorated, the crib of Bethlehem abounding being well represented. A sermon on the great event commemorated was preached by Father Brumage, and over 100 boys and girls were present. The dinner was concluded at 10 o'clock by the children in the Home. "The homeless Child," a poem, composed by one of the orphans, and another of the youthful inmates read a suitable address. Dinner took place at midday, when over 375 children sat down to a repast consisting of a large turkey, a ham, and a plum pudding.

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RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES.

CHRISTMAS IN THE CHURCHES.

SERVICES IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL AND OTHER CHURCHES—SERMONS BY THE REV. DR. O. H. TIFFANY, FATHER PRESTON AND THE REV. DR. H. C. POTTER.

Christmas was generally observed as a religious festival in Roman Catholic, Protestant Episcopal and many other churches. Chancels and altars were bright with Christmas green and the scarlet holly-berries, and the music was specially adapted to the occasion. At St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church the Rev. Dr. Tiffany preached on "The Incarnate Christ"; Father Preston, at St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, spoke of the Creation of man, the birth of Christ and the Second Advent, as the three wonderful events in the world's history. The Rev. Dr. Potter talked in Grace Church of the scenes in New-York one hundred years ago.

THE INCARNATE CHRIST.

The Rev. Dr. O. H. Tiffany of Saint Paul's Church (Methodist Episcopal).

Services in celebration of the day were held yesterday morning when hundreds of worshippers were hurrying to the first mass at the various Roman Catholic churches in the city. About 4 o'clock the doors were thrown open, and in a very short time afterward every seat was occupied. By 4:30 o'clock standing room could not be found in any of the large churches, and many were turned away for want of accommodation.

At this early hour high masses were sung with the same solemnity as on Sunday. Masses were celebrated at short intervals up to 10 o'clock, at which hour the last mass was said, and an appropriate sermon was preached. A large congregation was attracted to St. Cecilia's Church, in East One-hundred-and-fifth-st., by the announcement that the mass would be sung by several of the artists.

The Mass from General Mass in F was rendered by the full choir, and the solo "Canticum de Noel" was sung by Sister Frappoli. Miss Paroni sang at the offertory the "Ave Maris" by Rinaldi, and Sister Cordeau gave the solo "Tantum ergo" by Pius.

Father Dixon gave the sermon. The Rev. Father Dixon, who was ordained at Troy by Bishop McNulty last Saturday, celebrated his first mass at St. Lawrence's Church in East Eighty-fourth-st., and Father Dixon was a young man and was brought up in the parish. The Rev. Father Moylan, of the Jesuits, preached at the young priests' first mass. All the collections yesterday will be given to the orphans.

REPUDIATION IN TENNESSEE.

DEMOCRATS GIVE AWAY THE STATE'S HONOR.

SACRIFICING THEIR CREDIT ON PETTY FEARS—THE UTTERANCES OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS—THE REPUBLICAN MINORITY UNITED TO PAY THE STATE DEBT.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The importance to the country at large and especially to that portion of the Democratic party of the South who either from principle or interest are unwilling to accept repudiation of State indebtedness as being of kin to the policy of an "irredeemable currency," and therefore as belonging alike to the Democratic party, is so great that I cannot forbear calling your attention to some facts as full of mystery as any life can be. The mystery of the incarnation is the greatest of all mysteries, as it is the most important in all facts. The divinity of Christ was no mirage, it was His inherent essence; but His humanity was the one great miracle—the wonder of angels as it is the hope of all men. It was as complete as the incarnation, and to me it is as mysterious as the resurrection of Lazarus.

The assumption of humanity was God's plan of redemption: the world was too grand for mere humanity. Only in God was there to enclose the human soul, to give it a home, to bring it into the presence of the divine.

It is not the variety business on the decline?

Variety performances are so diverse that it is hard to define them, but no doubt, in a general way, variety is on the decline, and men and women whose only merit consists in dancing a jig or playing trombones are going back to digging potatoes. But this is not the decline the drama has suffered. The poor never economize; if they did, there would be no poor, in this country, at least. They attend the theatres in slightly diminished numbers, owing to hard times. Everything goes by fashion with the wealthy class, and within the last three years it has come to be fashionable to economize, and the better class of theatres have had to suffer in consequence—not so much because of necessity, but owing to fashion."

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